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Economic and Social Council

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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 9 of the provisional agenda*
National standardization

Development of the toponym data acquisition system in Indonesia

Summary**

The report outlines the progress made in the development of the toponym data acquisition system in Indonesia. The application runs on Android-based mobile phones, and its purpose is to help to collect toponym data from the field. Some functionalities of the application are described.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/85/CRP.85.

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

Report of the Government of Indonesia

Summary**

In the report, the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia, as the new national geographical names authority of Indonesia, reports the activities performed since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012. The highlights are the change of the national names authority and the submission of a new gazetteer of islands in Indonesia. In addition, progress in the development of the toponym data acquisition system is reported.

Other toponym activities performed by the Geospatial Information Agency, as well as other institutions, including the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries, the Coordinating Ministry for Maritime Affairs and the University of Indonesia, are reported, such as:

- Toponym surveys and the standardization of islands and natural and man-made features throughout Indonesia
- Seminars, meetings and training programmes on toponymy in Indonesia, including those to be held later in 2017
- Research and publications relating to toponyms
- The involvement of Indonesia in the Asia South-East Division of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names

Problems raised in the report include challenges resulting from the change of the national names authority and issues relating to exonyms that need to be resolved.

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* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/86/CRP.86.

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Item 9 (b) of the provisional agenda*
National standardization: office treatment of names

Shift from field work to crowdsourcing for toponymic data and map production in the Netherlands

Summary**

In the Netherlands, even though the cycle for updating topography was reduced from 12 years to 1 over the past decades, the field collection of geographical names came increasingly under pressure and, in 2009, was stopped. The yearly updated 360-degree street-view images used thereafter for updating topography were no solution, however, and more emphasis was therefore placed on the use of external data sources for enriching the TOP10NL database with names. For functional area features, the use of external data in combination with aerial images was helpful in transferring geometry from points to polygons and adding names. For the names of the most populated places and street names, a key register for addresses and buildings maintained by the municipalities was used as a source. However, many geographical names, such as of buildings and fields, could not be updated with the existing external data.

In the third quarter of 2016, a pilot project was launched, under which local historical societies were approached with a view to seeking their cooperation in checking the names in their areas. They were provided with maps of their working areas, lists of names from the TOP10NL database, a selection of unnamed features in that database and a brief instruction manual and requested to check existing names, add missing names and indicate the boundaries of area names. In the light of the successful outcome of the pilot project, the procedure is now being launched nationwide.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Jasper Hogerwerf (Netherlands), Kadaster. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/87/CRP.87.

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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 10 of the provisional agenda*
Geographical names as culture, heritage and identity (including indigenous, minority and regional language names)

Geographical names and linguistic minorities

Summary**

It is indicated in the report that a white paper on the Sami language has been published.[1] Discussed in that white paper, among other things, are the safeguarding and use of geographical names in Sami. Reference is made to previous cases of place names in Sami having been hidden, rewritten in Norwegian and/or removed from maps. Sami place names now enjoy strong legal protection under national legislation, specifically the Sami Act and the Place Names Act. There are also international obligations in this regard.

Emphasis is laid on the duty of the public authorities to actively promote the use of Sami place names in Sami-language areas.

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* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Lisa Monica Aslaksen, Sami Parliament of Norway. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/88/CRP.88.

[1] Available from https://www.regjeringen.no/no/dokumenter/nou-2016-18/id2515222/.

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Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

Report of Norway

Summary**

The Norwegian Place Names Act of 1990 was amended in 2006 and again in July 2015. The most significant change in 2015 concerned the spelling of names of smallholdings, whereby the owner of a smallholding now has the right to decide on the spelling of the geographical name of the property as long as documentation therefor can be obtained. New regulations for the Act entered into force in May 2017, giving the Language Council of Norway and the Sami Parliament of Norway legal authority to establish detailed spelling principles for geographical names.

The Norwegian Mapping Authority is responsible for the central register of place names, which contains the forms of geographical names approved in accordance with the Act. It currently contains 996,000 geographical names, with 1,178,000 spellings of 975,000 named places. Some 105,000 spellings are determined by law. The register was updated and put into production in 2016.

Unique addresses with street names and numbers help to ensure that people can locate an address more swiftly in an emergency and/or deliver services or goods. Accordingly, the Government of Norway initiated a project to create road addresses with street names for every household, business and building in the country. The project, led by the Mapping Authority, officially ran from 2010 to 2014, but work is in fact continuing. In May 2017, 90 per cent of all address objects in Norway had been assigned an official address with a street name and number. The Place Names Consultancy Service, administered by the Language Council and the Sami Parliament, has spent significant time and resources over the past few years

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Ingvil Nordland (Senior Adviser, Language Council of Norway), Kjetil Ringen (Senior Engineer, Norwegian Mapping Authority) and Lisa Monica Aslaksen (Head of Section, Sami Parliament of Norway). The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/89/CRP.89.

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providing advice on street naming for municipalities.

Although the Place Names Act and the Sami Act have been in force for more than 20 years, their implementation is lacking at several levels. One positive development, however, has been in the representation of Sami geographical names on road signs. The Norwegian Public Roads Administration has decided to add Sami names to existing signs and to use Sami names when signs are erected.

Ongoing local government reform will substantially reduce the number of administrative units in Norway. The Language Council offers guidance on questions concerning the names of new municipalities and counties.

The University of Oslo decided to discontinue the language archives and the associated name archives and its place name research group in 2015. In May 2016, the archives were transferred to the University of Bergen, with fewer academic and financial resources. It remains unknown whether the relocation will result in a revitalization of the name research environment in Norway. In the meantime, the toponymic expertise needed for the implementation of the Place Names Act is rapidly decreasing.

The Mapping Authority, the Place Names Consultancy Service, the Language Council and the Sami Parliament meet yearly to discuss legal, professional and organizational matters regarding the standardization of geographical names. The ongoing revision of the Place Names Act and its regulations has been a central point of discussion at these meetings over the past five years.